

Mental Health Professional Shortage Area Overview

The US Health Resources & Services Administration Office of Shortage Designation provides guidelines for determining federally qualified health professional shortage areas. Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) indicate geographic areas with a shortage of primary care providers, mental health providers and dental providers.

In Iowa, many of our HPSAs are entire counties; some are census tracts or groupings of census tracts or townships. State Primary Care Offices (PCO) analyzes and submits requests for shortage designations to HRSA. The Iowa PCO is located within the Bureau of Oral and Health Delivery Systems, Iowa Department of Public Health. A link to the PCO can be found by entering the URL: <http://www.idph.state.ia.us> and entering the term Primary Care Office into the search option.

Mental Health HPSA designations provide access to a number of programs including:

- National Health Service Corps loan repayment and placement of scholars,
- State Loan Repayment Program,
- J-1 visa waiver physician placement, and
- State Mental Health Shortage Area program.

Mental Health HPSA Analysis

Iowa's mental health HPSAs are comprised of groupings of counties called Mental Health Catchment Areas. Currently 89 of 99 counties are located in a designated Mental Health HPSA. Mental Health Care HPSAs are required to be re-analyzed every 4 years for re-designation or de-designation.

HPSA=population-to-psychiatrist ration greater than 30,000 to 1.

If the area has high needs, defined by having a high poverty rate **or** high youth ration **or** high elderly rate **or** high substance abuse prevalence, then the area may qualify at a 20,000 to 1 ratio.

